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Chairman of Foreign Affairs Oversight Subcommittee Says Greater Accountability, Transparency Critical To Prevent Repeat of Abuses Seen In Iraq

(WASHINGTON, DC) - Congressman Russ Carnahan today applauded the passage of bipartisan legislation that will save taxpayers billions of dollars by cracking down on waste and fraud in government contracting and establishing greater oversight and transparency of defense acquisitions.

"As we rebuild our economy, fiscal responsibility is crucial to our long-term economic strength," Carnahan said. "We must be relentless in our pursuit of greater accountability to make sure that taxpayer dollars are spent wisely and effectively."

Today, the House of Representatives voted to pass two bipartisan bills that can save taxpayers hundreds of billions of dollars:

- The **IMPROVE Acquisition Act** will reform the defense acquisition system to save American taxpayers \$135 billion over the next five years and make sure that the men and women who are risking their lives to safeguard our country get the proper equipment they need to do their jobs and protect themselves on the battlefield. The bill includes four key common-sense reforms: building a better accountability system, improving the management of the acquisition workforce, creating an auditable financial management system at DOD, and expanding and strengthening the industrial base to enhance competition and gain access to more technology

- The **Improper Payments Elimination and Recovery Act** targets nearly \$100 billion a year in improper government payments that result from poor oversight on the part of federal agencies. This legislation improves transparency in government agencies, prevents improper payments, requires agencies to recover overpayments, and holds top managers at agencies accountable for improper payments or overpayments.

In February, during his first hearing as Chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on International Organizations, Human Rights and Oversight, Carnahan received testimony about fraud and abuse perpetrated by private contractors working in Iraq during the reconstruction, and how lessons learned from this experience could ensure stricter oversight and effective management of taxpayer funds in future reconstruction efforts.

"Every day, there are brave American men and women putting their lives on the line in Iraq and Afghanistan,"

Carnahan said.

"We have a responsibility to them and to the taxpayers of this country to make sure that we have a strict accounting of how resources are being spent. We demanded it during the last administration, and it is only proper to

do so now."

Carnahan has consistently called for more rigorous accounting of American operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, calling it a patriotic duty that dates back to 1941, when then-Senator Harry S Truman of Missouri launched a Senate committee to look into how World War II resources were being spent.

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